

HUMOROUS TALES OF

TENALIRAMA

5

A SET OF 6 BOOKS

**CLASSIC LITERATURE
FOR
CHILDREN**



NAVNEET®

ABOUT TENALIRAMA...

Navneet is pleased to publish and present selected stories of Tenalirama.

The stories of Tenalirama date back to the beginning of the 16th century. Tenalirama served King Krishnadev Rai of Vijayanagar. He was known for his immense self-confidence, intelligence, wit and humour. His love for humanity and justice made him immortal.

We are confident that children will love reading humorous tales of Tenalirama's wit, wisdom and presence of mind.

All these stories are written in simple and well-structured language and illustrated with beautiful pictures. We are sure our young readers and parents will have a wonderful time reading witty stories of Tenalirama.

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TENALIRAMA

5

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1. CAN A FLOWER VASE TAKE SOMEONE'S LIFE?
2. THE MOST VALUABLE THING
3. THE EARTH SWALLOWS TENALIRAMA!
4. HANUMANA BLESSES TENALIRAMA
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6. DON'T SHOW ME YOUR FACE TOMORROW!



1. CAN A FLOWER VASE TAKE SOMEONE'S LIFE?

One day,
King Krishnadev Rai celebrated
the foundation day of his kingdom
with great pomp and gaiety.
Many kings attended the celebrations.
They brought with them valuable gifts
for King Krishnadev Rai.
Among these gifts
were four beautiful flower vases
made of glass.
They had intricate designs on them.
The king liked the vases very much.

The king appointed a special attendant
to look after the vases.
His name was Ramasinh.
Ramasinh took great care of the vases.
Every now and then,
he polished them carefully.



The vases looked sparkling clean...
as if they were just bought
from the market.

One day,
Ramasingh was polishing a vase.
Suddenly,
a cat jumped on him.
Ramasingh was so startled
that the vase fell down from his hands
and broke into pieces.

The news soon reached the king.
The king flew into a towering rage.
At once he barked,
"Throw Ramasingh into the prison.
He will be sent to the gallows
after two days."



Tenalirama,
who was also present in the court,
said,
"Your Majesty,
Isn't this punishment too big
for a small offence
like breaking a vase?"
But the king was in no mood
to listen to anyone.
He said angrily,
"I do not want any advice
in this matter.
I have given the right punishment."

At that moment,
the king was very angry
and so Tenalirama chose to remain silent.
But he said to himself,
"Come what may,
I must save this innocent man's life."

And however difficult a situation might be,
Tenalirama always found a way out.



Tenalirama went to meet Ramasinh in the prison.
He whispered something in Ramasinh's ear.
Ramasinh nodded his head in agreement.

On the day fixed,
gallows was set up for Ramasinh.

Before Ramasinh was sent to the gallows,
he was asked to express his last wish.
Ramasinh said,
"I have broken a vase.
But before I am sent to the gallows,
I wish to see the remaining three vases
in the presence of the king."

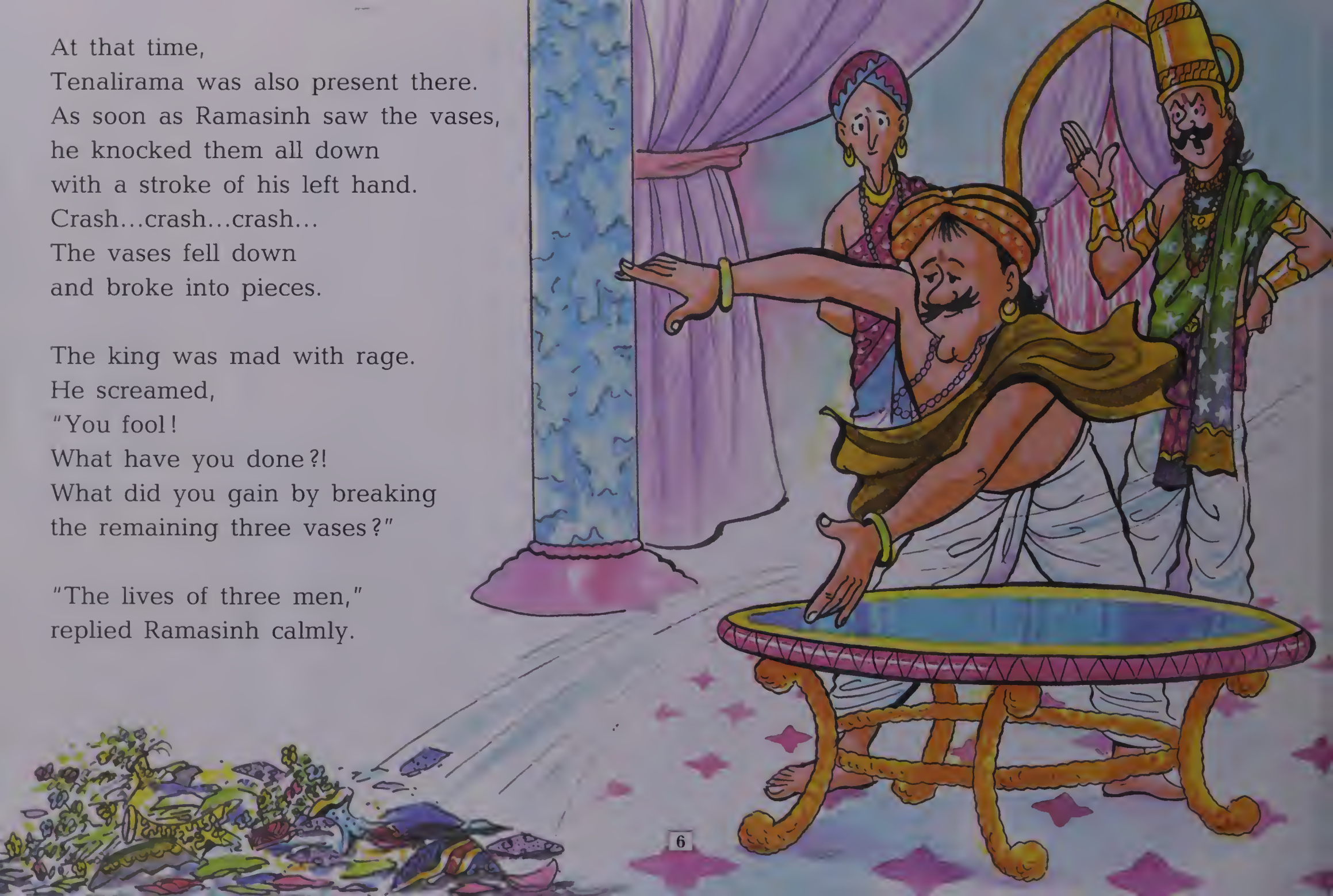
Ramasinh was brought to the palace
to see the remaining three vases.



At that time,
Tenalirama was also present there.
As soon as Ramasinh saw the vases,
he knocked them all down
with a stroke of his left hand.
Crash...crash...crash...
The vases fell down
and broke into pieces.

The king was mad with rage.
He screamed,
"You fool!
What have you done?!
What did you gain by breaking
the remaining three vases?"

"The lives of three men,"
replied Ramasinh calmly.



The king was taken aback!
He was burning with rage,
but he could not do anything at all.
He thought,
"Is there any punishment worse than
sending the offender to the gallows?"

It was then that he realized
that Ramasinh had really saved
the lives of three men.

The king realized his mistake.
He pardoned Ramasinh
and asked him,
"Who advised you to do all this?
Tell me the truth."

Ramasinh stood quietly,
with his hands joined humbly.
He looked at Tenalirama,
who had a naughty smile on his face.
The king thanked Tenalirama.



2. THE MOST VALUABLE THING

King Krishnadev Rai of Vijayanagar won a battle against a neighbouring kingdom. His victory was celebrated all over the kingdom.

The king thought,
"To commemorate this grand victory, a Pillar of Victory must be built right in the heart of Vijayanagar."

The task of building the Pillar of Victory was assigned to an artisan.

The artisan was a very talented, hardworking and an honest man.

He was dedicated to his art.

Within a period of twelve months, he built a magnificent pillar.

It had beautiful, intricate designs carved on it.

The artisan was paid well for his outstanding accomplishment.



When the king saw the Pillar of Victory,
he was extremely pleased
with the artisan.

He said to him,
"I am impressed with your skill.
Ask whatever you wish for,
and it will be granted to you."

The artisan joined his hands
and said humbly,
"Your Majesty,
I have been paid well for my job.
I do not wish for anything
except your blessings."

The king said,
"But you just cannot refuse today.
You must ask for something."

The courtiers,
who were present there,
also persuaded the artisan
to ask for something.



They said to him,
"This is a golden opportunity for you.
Therefore,
you must make the most of it
and ask for something
that will make the rest of your life
easy and comfortable."
The artisan said,
"I cannot accept anything
but the remuneration due to me."
When the king heard this,
he felt quite hurt.
"I really want to give a handsome reward
to this artisan.
And how can he refuse me?"
he thought.
And so the king insisted
that the artisan ask for something.

Tenalirama had not yet come to the court.
And in his absence,
there was none who could solve the problem.
The poor artisan felt very helpless
against the king's repeated insistence.



At last,
the artisan emptied his bag of tools,
held it before the king
and said,
"If you insist on giving me something,
please fill this bag
with the most valuable thing
in the whole world."

The king ordered his attendants,
"Fill this bag with the most precious
gems, jewellery and diamonds."

At once
the artisan said,
"Are gems, jewellery and diamonds
the most valuable in the world?"
The king looked at the courtiers
and asked them,
"Which is the most valuable thing
in the world?"

The courtiers looked at one another.
They had no answer to this question.
At last,
the king sent for Tenalirama.



The king asked him,
"Tenalirama,
which is the most valuable thing
in the whole world?"
Tenalirama quickly replied,
"Well, that depends on the receiver."

Before coming to the court,
Tenalirama had obtained all the details
from the attendant.

He asked,
"Who wants the most valuable thing
in the world?"

"Me,"
said the artisan
and held his empty bag before Tenalirama.

Tenalirama took the bag in his hands,
opened it wide,
and moved it up and down vigorously.
Having done this at least seven times,
he quickly closed the bag.



Returning the bag to the artisan,
Tenalirama said,
"Here, take this.
I have filled your bag
with the most valuable thing
in the whole world."
The artisan was delighted.
He took his bag and went home.

The royal priest asked Tenalirama,
"We all know
you did not put anything
into the artisan's empty bag.
Yet when he left the court,
he looked completely satisfied!"
Tenalirama said,
"Well, what did you see then?
I filled his bag with air.
Air is the most valuable thing
in the whole world.
Can we live without air?"

Everyone in the court praised Tenalirama
for his good judgment.



3. THE EARTH SWALLOWS TENALIRAMA!

One day,
a crook disguised himself as a sage
and came to Vijayanagar.
He cheated people
by selling them
a medicine for happiness!
He would make them eat a sweet
mixed with *dhatura*.
And when the people became unconscious,
he would rob them.

Many a time,
many people lost their lives
after eating the sweet given by him.
And those who were lucky enough
to regain their consciousness,
would eventually turn mad.

The news soon reached Tenalirama.
He thought,
"I must teach this man a lesson."

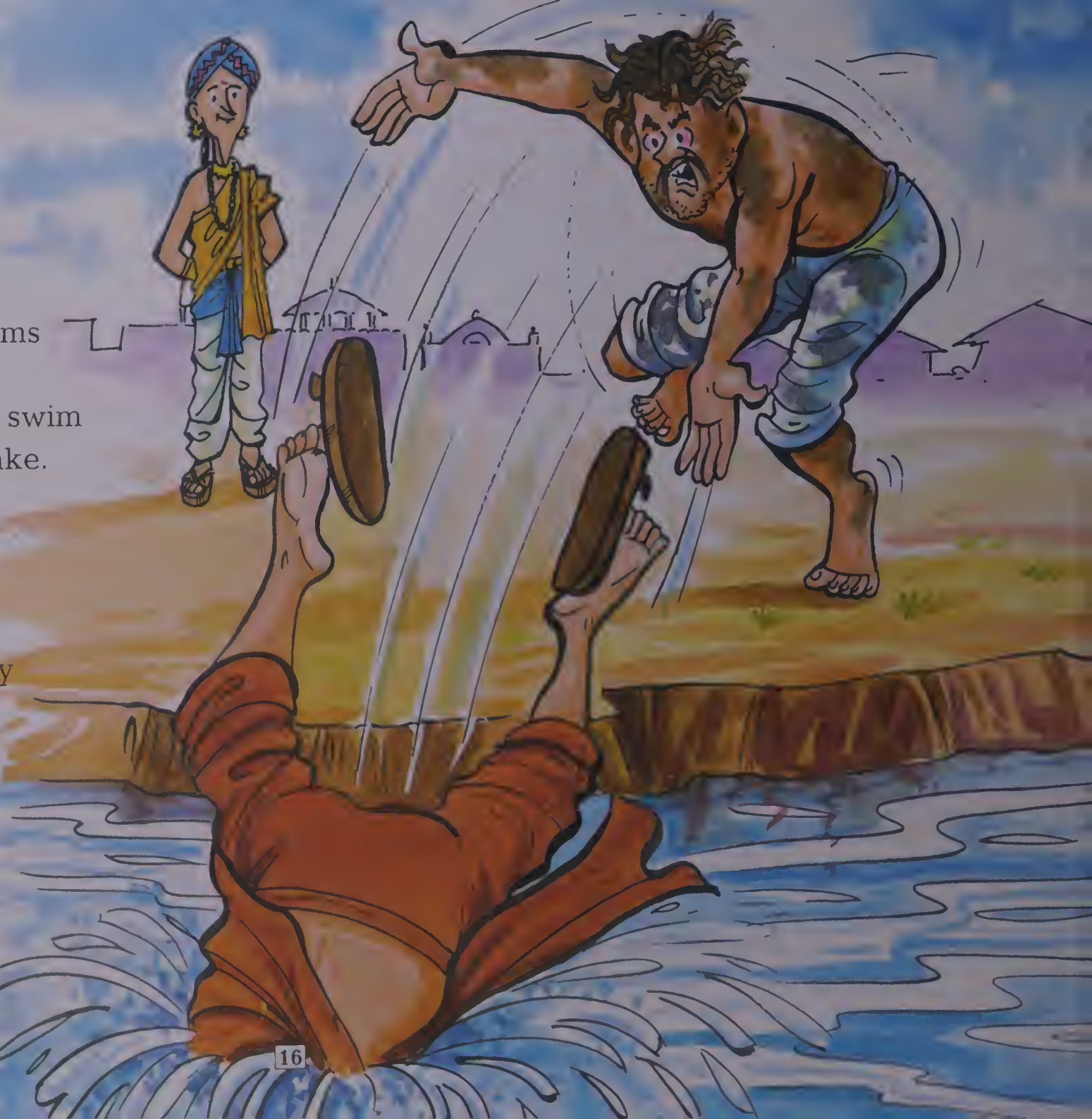


One day,
when Tenalirama was walking
on the banks of the lake,
he saw a man who had turned mad
after eating the crook's medicine.
The man appeared to be very angry.
He was quarrelling with his own shadow!
When Tenalirama went a little further,
he saw the crook,
who was disguised as a sage.
Tenalirama recognized the crook
and so he persuaded him
to go with him to the banks of the lake.
The mad man was still quarrelling
with his own shadow.
Tenalirama said to the crook,
"You are a sage...
a kind-hearted man...
a pious soul...
I am sure if you chant some *mantras*
and tap this mad man on his head,
he will be cured of his madness."



Without losing a moment,
the crook gave the mad man
a tap on his head.
The mad man got so angry
that he began to beat the crook.
He became so furious
that he lifted the crook in his arms
and threw him into the lake.
The crook did not know how to swim
and so he got drowned in the lake.

The royal priest came to know
that Tenalirama was involved
in drowning a sage in the lake.
He went to the king immediately
and complained,
"Your Majesty,
with the help of a mad man,
Tenalirama has taken the life
of an innocent sage
by drowning him in the lake."



The king was shocked and angry.
He ordered his guards,
"Take Tenalirama to the forest
and bury him in such a way
that only his head should remain
above the ground.
Then crush his head
under an elephant's feet.
And put that mad man
in a mental asylum."

Two of the guards
took Tenalirama into the forest.
They dug a deep pit
and buried him up to his neck.
Only his head was seen
above the ground.
They then left the spot
to fetch an elephant.



Meanwhile,
a hunchbacked washerman,
who was passing by,
saw Tenalirama
and said,
"Hey, what is the matter?
Why are you buried in this manner?"
Tenalirama looked at the washerman
and said,
"I am a hunchbacked man.
A sage had told me
that if I remain buried like this
for twenty-four hours,
my hunchback will disappear.
The time period of twenty-four hours
has already ended.
Will you please help me to come out?
Let's see if my hunchback has disappeared."
The hunchbacked washerman
was only too glad to help Tenalirama.
When he finally pulled Tenalirama
out of the pit,
he was surprised to see
that the hunchback had disappeared!



The hunchbacked washerman
said to Tenalirama,
"Now will you please bury me
with only my head above the ground?
If I remain buried like that
for twenty-four hours,
I'm sure my hunchback
will also disappear."

Tenalirama buried the washerman
in such a way
that only his head could be seen
above the ground.

He then left the spot quickly.

Now the two guards took a lot of time
to bring an elephant.

But when they did arrive at the spot
with an elephant,
they were alarmed to see
that instead of Tenalirama,
someone else was buried there!

"Who are you?"

they screamed.

"How did you manage
to bury yourself here?"



The hunchbacked washerman narrated his story to the guards. One of the guards said, "You fool! Do you really think this will cure your hunchback! Do you realize that you have helped a criminal to escape? Now we will crush your head under the elephant's feet."

Hearing this, the washerman said, "If you trample me to death, you will be in big trouble. If the king comes to know that Tenalirama has escaped, do you think he will spare you?"



The two guards were baffled.
They did not know what to do.
Just then an old man came there.
Because of his old age,
he was bent from the waist.
He asked them,
"What is the matter?"

The guards narrated
the whole story to him.
The old man said,
"First, get this washerman out.
Then go to the king and say,
After burying the accused,
we went to get an elephant.
But we took a long time
to find an elephant.
When we returned to the spot,
we were shocked to find
that the earth had swallowed the accused!
Now whom should we trample
under the elephant's feet?"



Now what had happened was
that the king,
in a mad rage,
had given the orders
to punish Tenalirama.
But then he soon came to know
the truth about the crook.

The king repented his mistake.
He just couldn't control his emotions.
He lamented,
"O my God!
How could I do this?
By now
Tenalirama must have reached heaven.
What should I do now?"

Just then the two guards came there.
They said,
"Your Majesty,
the earth has swallowed Tenalirama!"



The king was delighted to hear this news.
He said to the guards,
"This is good news!
Tenalirama has used his brains
to escape safely from the jaws of death.
But an accused has escaped because of you.
Therefore,
both of you deserve to be punished.
But I am thrilled to know
that Tenalirama is safe.
And so I forgive your offence...
but on one condition...
You must present Tenalirama in the court."

Hearing this,
the old man,
who was bent from the waist,
came forward.
He bowed to the king
and revealed his true identity to him.
"Ah! Tenalirama..."
exclaimed the king.
He got up from his throne
and rushed to embrace Tenalirama.

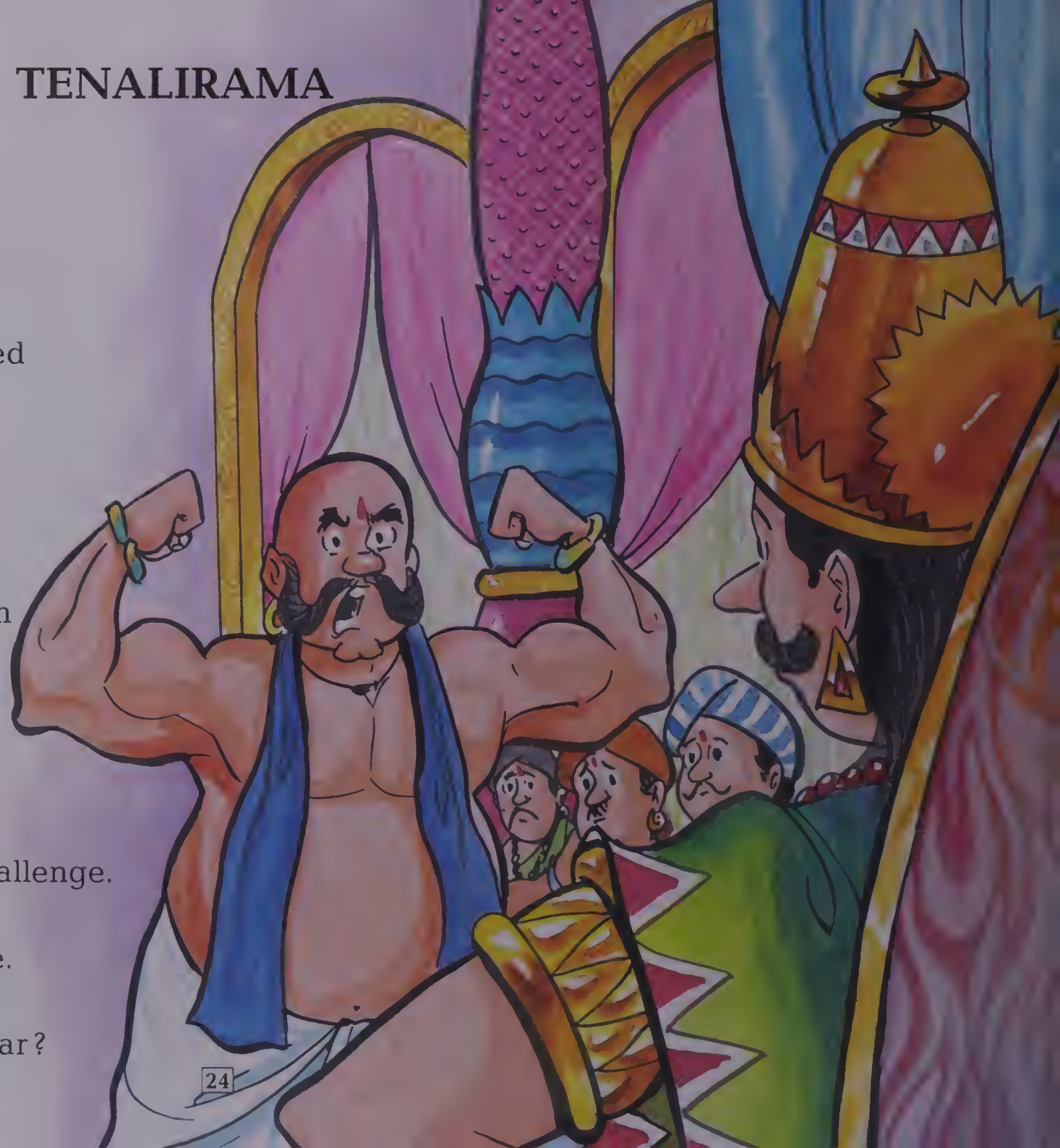


4. HANUMANA BLESSES TENALIRAMA

One day,
a wrestler from Delhi
came to the court of Vijayanagar.
He was tall and strong.
His well-built body could be compared
to that of the mighty Bheema.

Showing off his biceps,
he challenged,
"Your Majesty,
is there any wrestler in your kingdom
who can defeat me in a duel?"

When the wrestlers of Vijayanagar
saw this brawny wrestler,
they began to tremble with fright.
None of them dared to accept his challenge.
They all stood in the court
with their heads bent down in shame.
But now,
what about the prestige of Vijayanagar?



However,
the king asked his wrestlers,
"Who is ready to fight a duel
with this wrestler from Delhi?"

The question was greeted with silence.
But Tenalirama rose from his seat
and said,
"I will fight a duel with this wrestler."

The whole court was thunderstruck.
Everyone thought,
"Look at this lean and pale Tenalirama!
How will he fight a duel
with this burly wrestler?"
Some jealous courtiers muttered,
"This should be great fun!
Tenalirama will get a good bashing today."

Tenalirama said,
"But I need three days' time.
On the fourth day,
I will fight a duel with this wrestler."



The king, however, was pleased to see the courage displayed by Tenalirama. But at the same time, he feared that the wrestler would knock poor Tenalirama dead.

The news spread like wild fire. The people of Vijayanagar loved and respected Tenalirama. Some of them even went to his house to try and dissuade him from fighting the duel. Tenalirama's wife said, "He has gone to the Hanumana temple on the bank of the river. For three days, he will perform harsh penance to please Hanumana and gain immense strength. He will then fight a duel with the wrestler from Delhi."

The news of Tenalirama's penance spread across the kingdom.



Even the wrestler from Delhi
heard about it.
He became anxious.
He thought,
"Will Hanumana
really bless Tenalirama
with immense strength?"

On the third night,
the nervous wrestler
went to the Hanumana temple
on the bank of the river.

Tenalirama's attendant saw the wrestler
walking fast towards the temple.
He quickly went into the temple
and informed Tenalirama,
"The wrestler is coming here."

As instructed by Tenalirama,
the attendant hid behind the idol of Hanumana.
The wrestler came to the temple
and peeped inside.

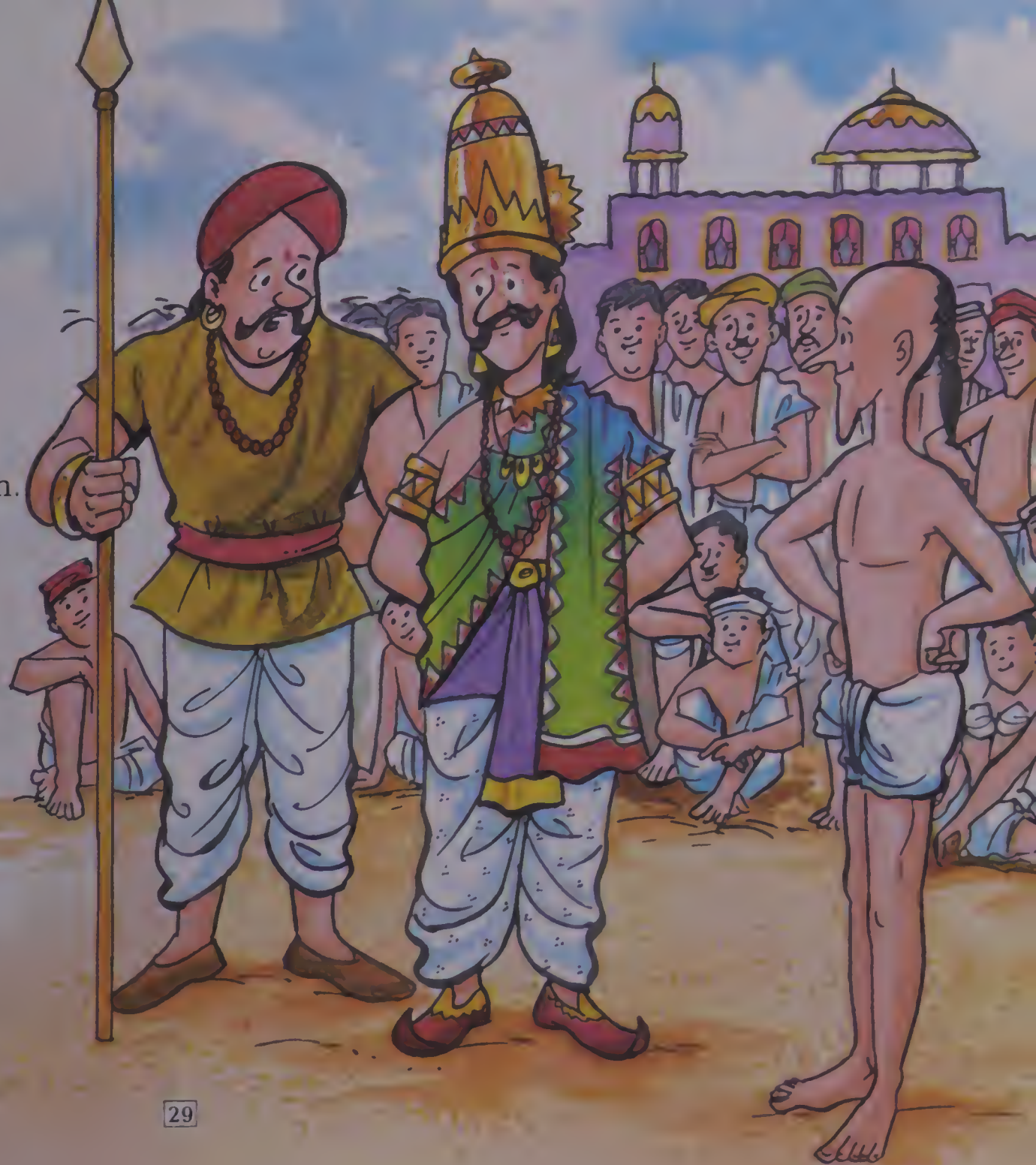


He saw Tenalirama
sitting in front of the idol,
chanting some *mantras* loudly.
A lamp was burning brightly.
The whiff of incense sticks
permeated the temple.
Just then the wrestler heard
the mysterious voice of Hanumana,
"O Tenalirama!
I am pleased by your harsh penance.
Now stretch your hands
to receive my blessings."
Tenalirama stretched his hands
before the idol.
At that moment,
a flower from Hanumana's head
fell into Tenalirama's hands.
Once again, the mysterious voice said,
"Now eat this flower.
You will gain immense strength.
And then you can floor the hefty wrestler
with a single punch."
Hearing this,
the wrestler began to tremble with fear.



The fourth day dawned.
At the appointed time,
Tenalirama reached the arena
to fight a duel with the wrestler.
The people of Vijayanagar
thronged to witness the event.
All were eagerly awaiting the arrival
of the wrestler.
The king also came there.
But the wrestler was nowhere to be seen.
The king sent his attendants
to fetch the wrestler.

After some time,
the attendants returned
and said to the king,
"At midnight,
without informing anyone,
the wrestler stealthily left Vijayanagar."
Tenalirama looked at the king
and said,
"What is more powerful?
Brains...?
Or brawn...?"



5. THE PROOF OF HONESTY

Many courtiers were jealous of Tenalirama. Hence, they never missed any opportunity to try and poison the king's mind against Tenalirama. They often complained about Tenalirama's corruption. The king got tired of hearing the same complaints again and again.

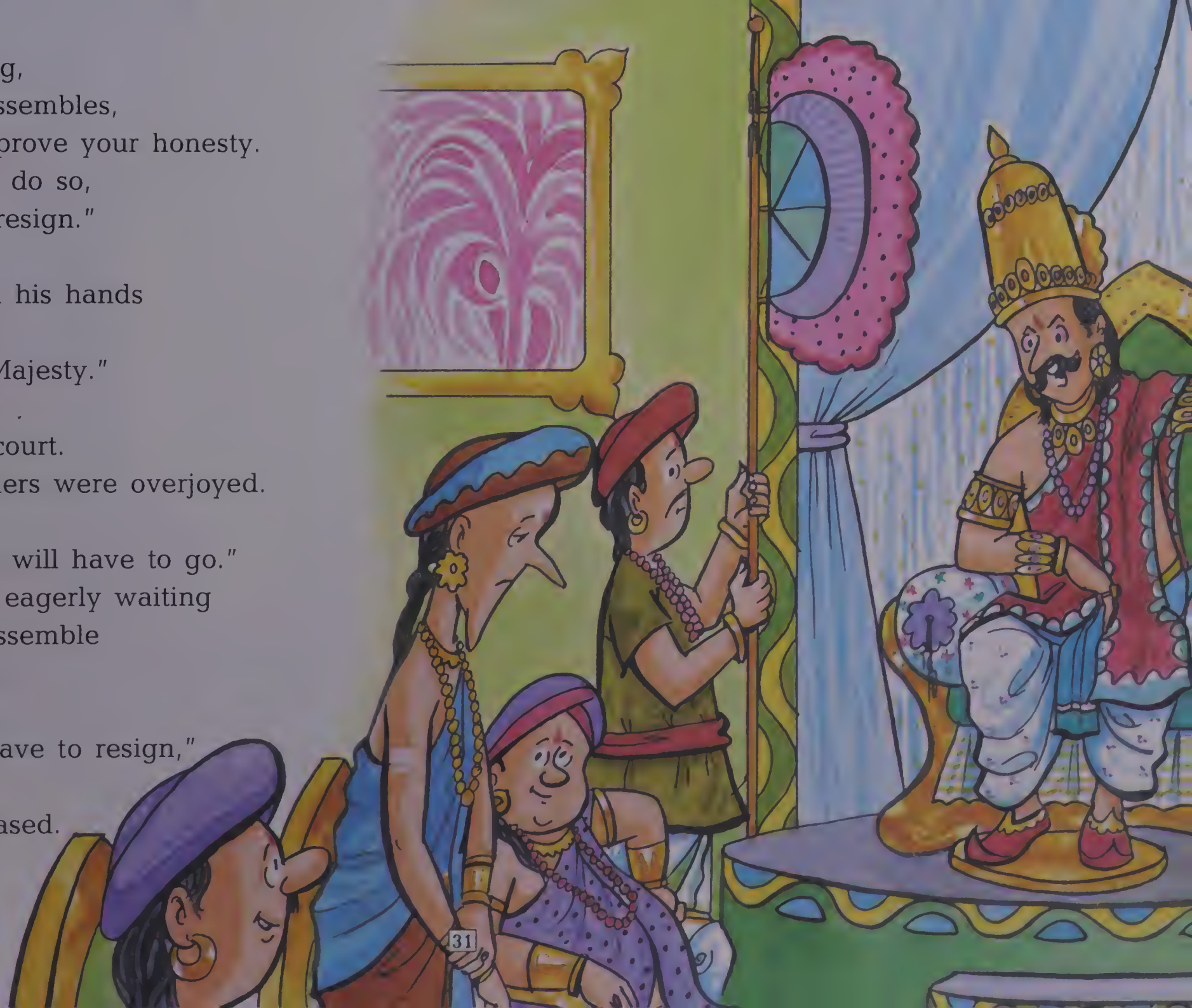
Many a time, it happens that if a lie is consistently repeated, one begins to believe it as the truth. It happened with the king, too. One day, he became so upset with the complaints that he said to Tenalirama, "Why do I get so many complaints accusing you of corruption?"



Tomorrow morning,
when the court assembles,
you will have to prove your honesty.
And if you fail to do so,
you will have to resign."

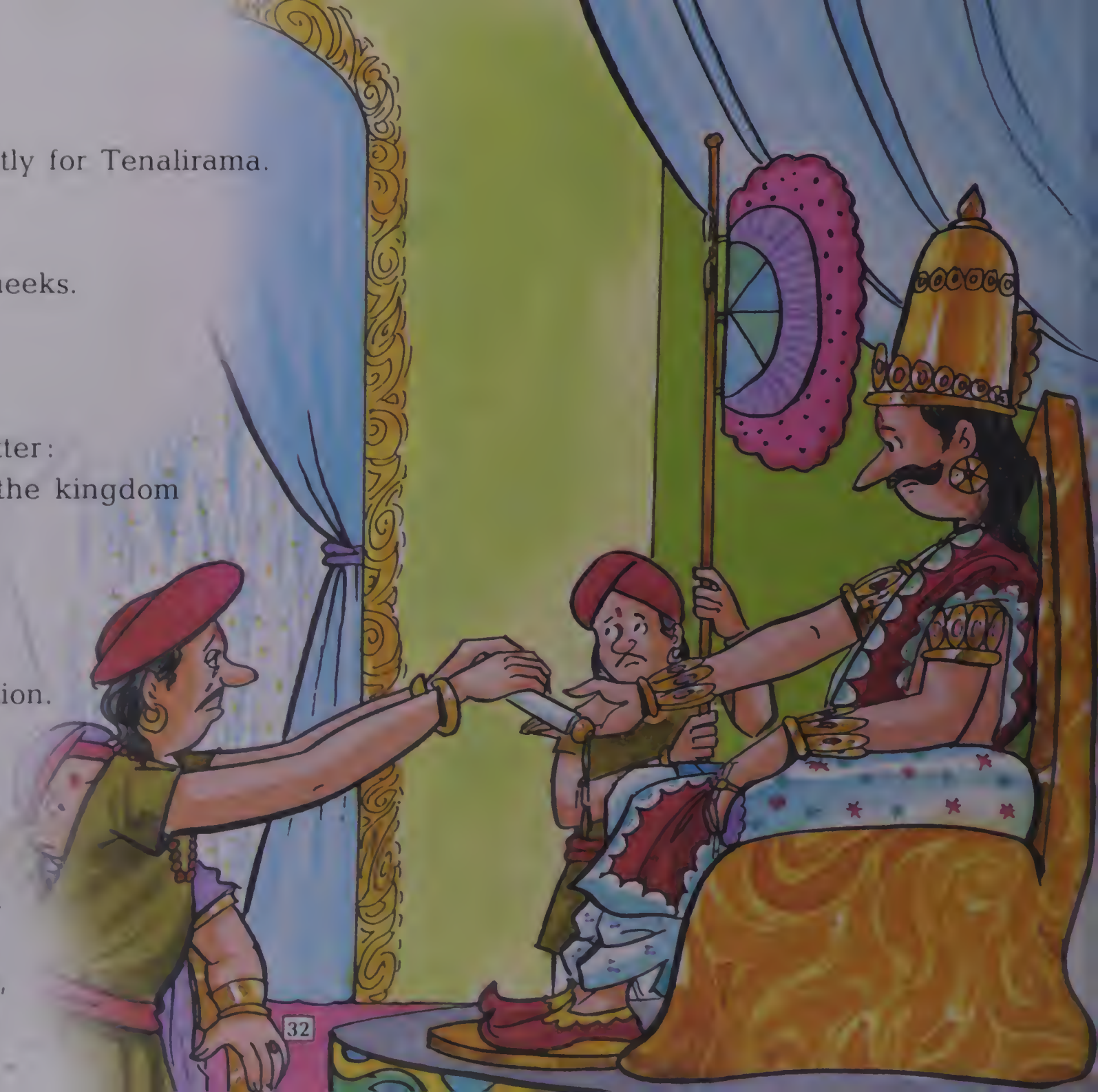
Tenalirama joined his hands
and said meekly,
"All right, Your Majesty."

He then left the court.
The jealous courtiers were overjoyed.
They thought,
"Now Tenalirama will have to go."
All of them were eagerly waiting
for the court to assemble
the next morning.
"This time
Tenalirama will have to resign,"
they thought,
feeling rather pleased.



The next morning,
when the court assembled,
everyone was waiting impatiently for Tenalirama.
But instead of Tenalirama,
his attendant came there.
Tears were rolling down his cheeks.
With a heavy heart,
he walked up to the king
and gave him a letter.
The king began to read the letter:
"Your Majesty! I have served the kingdom
with utmost sincerity.
I have lived an honest life.
But in spite of
all my honesty and integrity,
I have been accused of corruption.
What is the point in leading
a tainted life?
And so I am ending my life
by drinking poison.
I do not blame anyone for this.
I hope you will forgive me.

Faithfully yours,
Tenalirama."

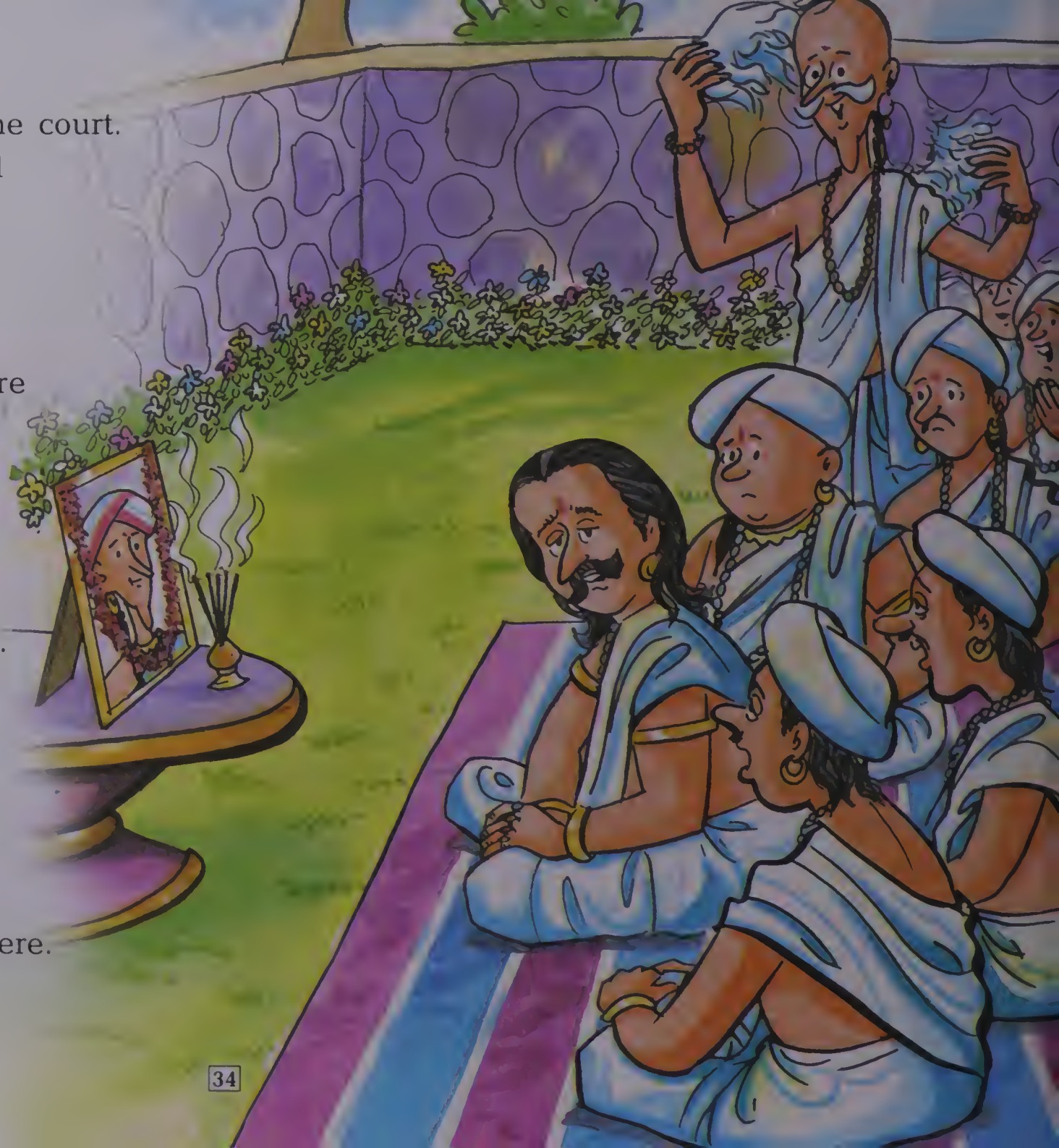


On reading the letter,
the king was overwhelmed.
Tears began to roll down his cheeks.
In a voice choked with emotion,
he said,
"O my God!
Am I out of my mind?!
Why did I accuse Tenalirama
of corruption?
I hate myself for being unjust to him.
I curse myself
for being the cause of his death."

Even the courtiers were saddened
by the news
of Tenalirama's untimely death.
The jealous courtiers thought,
"Tenalirama was, indeed,
an honest man.
We should not have
accused him of corruption."
The whole kingdom
was plunged in grief.



That evening,
a condolence meeting was held in the court.
A two minutes' silence was observed
in Tenalirama's memory.
The king then said,
"We will never get a brilliant
and honest man like Tenalirama."
Now all those who were present there
began to pay
rich tributes to Tenalirama.
Even the courtiers,
who were against him said,
"Tenalirama was an honest man.
He was falsely accused of corruption.
Tenalirama was intelligent, learned,
truthful and sincere.
He was a great patriot.
We will never get a man like him."
At that moment,
a sage got up
from amongst the crowd gathered there.
He removed his robes
and revealed his true identity.
It was Tenalirama himself!

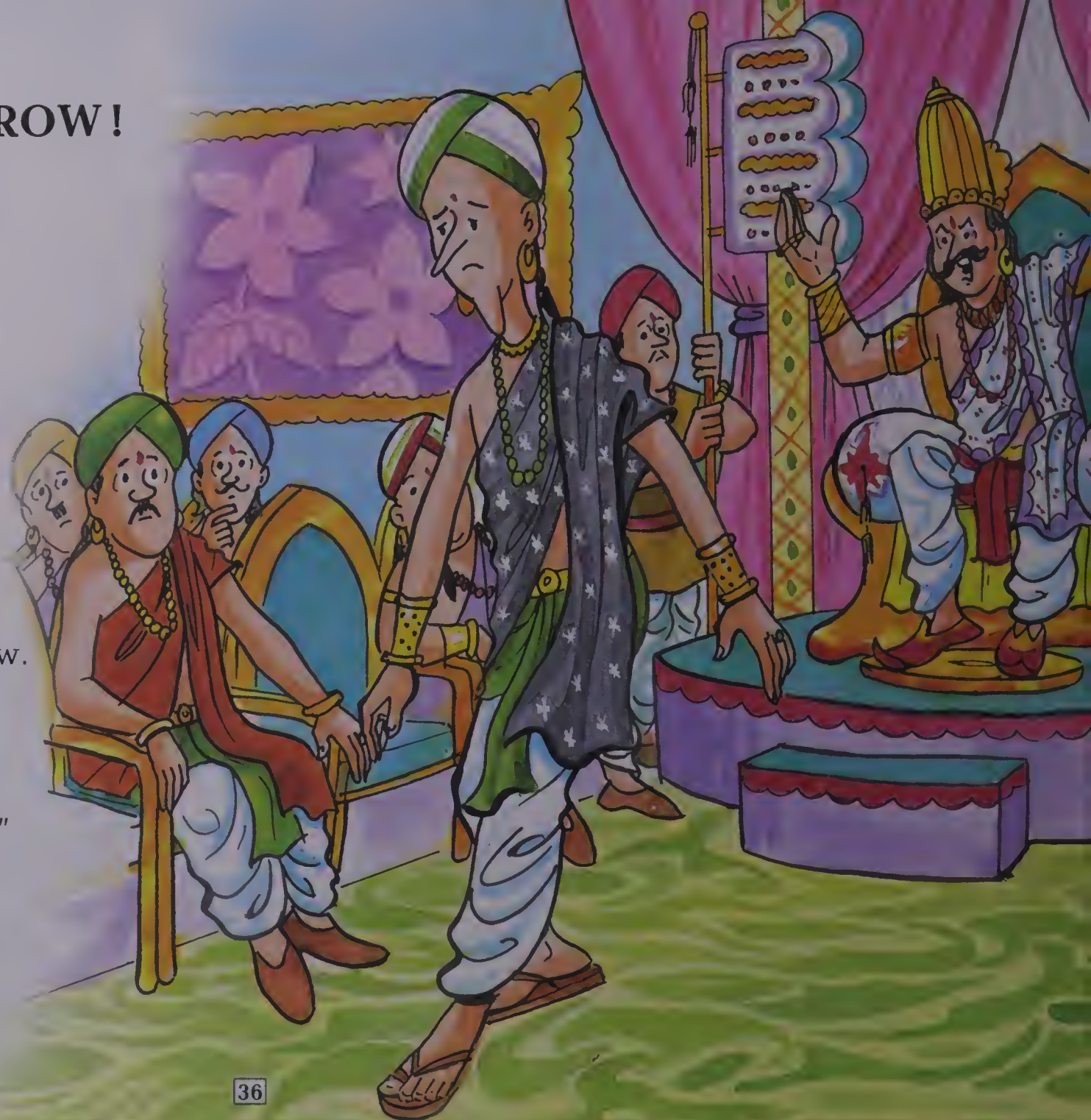


The people cheered and clapped loudly
to express their joy on seeing Tenalirama alive.
Even the courtiers joined them.
After the applause had died down,
Tenalirama said,
"Your Majesty,
Have you got the proof
of my honesty?
Didn't you see
how even my adversaries
praised me for my honesty?
Isn't that proof enough?"
The king was relieved
to see Tenalirama alive and safe.
The courtiers and the people
were beside themselves with joy.
They all said,
"Long live Tenalirama..."



6. DON'T SHOW ME YOUR FACE TOMORROW!

King Krishnadev Rai was very fond of Tenalirama. He couldn't do without him even for a moment. Yet one day, for some reason, the king was annoyed with Tenalirama. He was so irked that he said, "Go away Tenalirama! Do not show me your face tomorrow. If you don't obey my order, you will be flogged mercilessly in this very court, in the presence of all the courtiers." The courtiers were stunned. They quietly watched the scene. Tenalirama was hurt to hear this. However, he did not utter a word and left the court quietly.



The following morning,
when the king was on his way to the court,
he met one of his courtiers.
The courtier began to poison the king's mind
against Tenalirama.
He said,
"Your Majesty,
in spite of your strict warning,
Tenalirama has come to the court today.
He has disobeyed you."

The king was enraged.
He said,
"Is that true?
How dare he defy me?"
Taking advantage of the king's displeasure,
the courtier said,
"That is not all, Your Majesty.
He has shown great disrespect
for the royal court.
Ever since he has arrived in the court,
he has been playing some mischief
and all the courtiers just can't stop laughing
at his tomfoolery."



The king was infuriated.
He screamed,
"Is that really true?
How dare Tenalirama misbehave
in the royal court!
Does he think the court
is a stage to display his theatricals?"
The courtier was happy
to see the king react so strongly.
"Tenalirama will be in great trouble now,"
he mumbled, feeling rather pleased.
The king was so irritated
that he actually rushed to the court.
When he reached the court,
he realized that the courtier was right.
Tenalirama was standing
in the middle of the court.
He had covered his head with an earthen pot.
The pot had two holes,
and it was painted like a joker's face.
Tenalirama gently tapped the pot with his hands
and was dancing to the rhythmic beating.
The courtiers were enjoying this
and laughing heartily.



When the king entered the court,
all the courtiers stopped laughing.
The king was burning with rage.

He roared,

"What is all this nonsense, Tenalirama?!
Didn't I ask you
not to show me your face?
Would you like to be flogged now?
Why did you defy my order?"

Tenalirama joined his hands
and said respectfully,

"Your Majesty,
I have not defied your order.
You had asked me
not to show my face.
And I have obeyed you.
Can you see my face?
Besides,
we always discuss
serious matters in the court.
Is that fair?
Don't you think we all need a break?
Shouldn't we enjoy some jokes sometimes?"



The king,
in fact,
was quite amused
by Tenalirama's appearance.
And when he heard his words,
he burst out laughing.
He said,
"You are right, Tenalirama..."
He then muttered,
"There is no point in getting angry
with a joker."

However,
the king was no longer annoyed
with Tenalirama.
He said,
"Tenalirama,
will you please remove this pot
from your head
and take your seat?"



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